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The Anthracite Strike Commission's Report.

The award of the Arbitration Commission on the anthracite coal strike appointed by President Roosevelt, by which both operators and miners agreed in advance to abide, was rendered on March 21.

The commission's summary of its awards gives evidence that the seven eminent men composing it have studied the various aspects of the conflict with great thoroughness and conscientiousness. Their work seems to have been remarkably harmonious, and their final conclusions practically unanimous. The commission pursued its investigations for about five months, personally visited the miners and the miners' quarters, and examined over five hundred and fifty witnesses.

The general impression one receives from reading the summarized points of the award is that the commissioners were convinced that the miners had serious grounds for complaint as to hours of work, rate of wages, etc., and that responsibility for the conflict rested chiefly upon the operators, who were unwilling to show any spirit of conciliation.

The miners are given by the award a general advance of ten per cent. in wages. The hoisting engineers are given a reduction of hours from nine to eight without change of wages. In other departments hours are reduced from ten to nine. Those employed in positions which are manned continuously shall be relieved from duty on Sunday by substitutes, without loss of pay. Overtime work shall receive extra pay. The miners of any colliery shall be allowed to appoint check weighmen, when a majority of them wish it, to see that the weighing is accurately done. Mine cars shall be distributed among miners as uniformly and equitably as possible. Any increase in the size of cars shall be accompanied by a proportionate increase in the rate paid per car. A sliding scale of wages, with a minimum, is fixed, according to which the employee shall receive one per cent. advance for each increase of five cents in price at New York above \$4.50 per ton for most kinds of coal. The average prices are to be computed by a commissioner appointed by a circuit judge of the third judicial circuit of the United States.

By these provisions, which are to continue in force for three years, it will be seen that the miners as workmen have won a substantial victory. On the other hand, the commission has shown equal regard for the proper interests of the operators. Only a part of the demand for increased wages was allowed. The present methods of payment for coal mined shall be adhered to unless changed by mutual agreement. No person shall be discriminated against or interfered with because of membership or non-membership in any labor organization. Wages are to be

paid directly to each laborer by the company and not to the contract miners. These provisions will go far to prevent any tyranny by the labor organizations, and also any discrimination by employers against union laborers. The unions are thus indirectly recognized, and the commission declares that the workmen have the same right to join unions that the stockholders have to enter into a corporation.

One of the most important phases of this eminently fair award is the provision for a permanent joint board of conciliation, to consist of six persons, three to be named by the operators and three by labor organizations representing a majority of the workmen in each of three districts into which the whole region shall be divided. To this commission shall be referred all difficulties or disagreements arising under the award, or any other serious differences arising between the miners and the employers. In case this board shall be unable to decide any question submitted to it, an umpire is to be named by a circuit judge of the third judicial circuit of the United States. This commission becomes thus in reality a permanent board of arbitration during the three years of the life of the award.

In addition to the award, certain recommendations are made by the commission: namely, the discontinuance of "the coal and iron police," as irritating, and resort in cases of necessity to the regular police authorities; a stricter enforcement of the laws in relation to the employment of children; and provision by the State and Federal governments for a compulsory investigation, by a committee of inquiry, of any serious trouble like the recent one, the results of the investigation to be given to the public. It is not suggested that this investigating committee should have power to go further than to find out and publish the facts. The commission disapproves of compulsory arbitration, but thinks that such a committee of inquiry would, through the power of public opinion, open the way in all cases of serious trouble for a pacific settlement and the avoidance of such a coal crisis as that which has just been experienced.

It is thought by intelligent labor leaders that the joint conciliation board provided for under the award will lead to a general permanent agreement between the miners and the operators covering all their relations—such an agreement as now exists between the bituminous operators and the United Mine Workers.

The report of this strike commission is certain to have great influence hereafter in the whole field of industrial troubles in rendering both employers and workmen more considerate of each other. The award has made it clear that arbitration, or something of the nature of arbitration, is the only adequate and satisfactory method of dealing with serious differences when they have once developed. The coal

operators in this case insisted that there was nothing to arbitrate. The commission, after a thorough and impartial investigation, says in substance that there were a number of things imperatively requiring arbitration. It will be much more difficult after this investigation, conducted at the demand of the public and on an unprecedented scale, for a great corporation hereafter coolly to ignore the well-founded demands of a large mass of workmen and to peremptorily refuse to submit the questions at issue to disinterested parties.

The report has also made it clear, if that were needed, that the claim of employers, so often made, that it is nobody's business but their own how their business is run, is a radically false position. The commissioners declare in substance that laborers have certain rights in connection with an employment which the employers have no right to ignore. In other words, they say that men, whatever may be their industrial relations to one another, are still members of the same human brotherhood, with mutual interests and rights and obligations which they ought not to ignore and must, as far as possible, be induced to observe.

From this higher point of view, that manhood is superior to all considerations of gain, from which one is glad to believe that there is on the average an increasing disposition to judge all the material relations of men, the work of this commission cannot fail to contribute in no small measure to the promotion of true Christian civilization, not locally only, but throughout the nation and the world.

Army Reduction in France.

Are we on the eve of seeing the French army materially reduced, and thus the military rivalry with Germany definitely abandoned? Recent occurrences raise the question, though they can as yet hardly be said to justify a positive answer.

The French Senate has already adopted the principle of a two years' military service, instead of three as heretofore. This is a step toward reduction. But much more significant is the position which the Socialist party have won in the Chamber of Deputies and the anti-military stand which they are there taking. They have, with their largely increased number of members, secured the office of vice-president of the Chamber, and they have recently in an open and courageous way tackled the problem of disarmament, — the most serious question now confronting not France only, but the whole civilized world.

The demand which they make, as recently set forth by Mr. Millerand and Mr. Jaurès, is that the army shall be reduced to the proportions of a national police force. There are several reasons back of the demand. The economic one is that the people may be relieved of the heavy burden now imposed upon them by the overgrown military establishment.

But the higher grounds of their demand are ethical and social. They propose that the nation shall abandon once for all, as unworthy of a great civilized people, the cherished purpose of vengeance for the loss of the two Rhine provinces. That question they believe it much wiser to leave to the future determination of the sense of justice working along friendly pacific lines than to cherish the vengeful purpose of some day attempting to settle it by violence.

In this they strike a very high note, and at the same time show their practical good sense. A war over the lost provinces, even if they should be won back, would only result in another generation of intense hatred and suspicion, with bigger armies and bigger debts, and finally probably another war of retaliation, with entire uncertainty as to whose the provinces would remain.

There is still another high motive for their insistence on the reduction of the army. They hold, as one of the fundamental principles of their creed, that genuinely friendly relations between nations, as between individuals, ought to be cultivated, and that this cannot be done while a great army is maintained as if their neighbors were unmitigatedly malevolent and designing enemies. The presence of such an army is a constant provocative of dislike and danger from over the border.

In this again they are entirely right. The apparent risk which they are willing to take of laying France open to attack and conquest is really much less than that which the nation is under continually, if the present régime goes on. It is indeed no risk at all. The moment it is known on the other side of the Rhine that the great French army, which has been created by the spirit of vengeance and distrust, is being reduced, that moment Germany will be much less disposed to give France trouble than she is to-day. The response would be instant and cordial to the peaceful challenge thus thrown down, for the same popular movement against militarism is going on in Germany as in France, and gradually pushing its way up nearer and nearer the throne.

This program of the French Socialist party, which has the sympathy of a good many Frenchmen who are not professedly Socialistic, is of course meeting with the solid and intense opposition of the military classes. It is viewed askance also by many others who are as yet unable to rise above the traditional ideas which have heretofore ruled them. They say: Let Germany begin disarmament and all will be well. She has nothing to fear from France, who would immediately follow her example. But as yet they do not seem to be able to follow out their reasoning far enough to assure themselves that if Germany, disarmed, would, as they assert, be entirely without danger from France, so would France, disarmed, have no occasion to fear injury from over the border.

The Socialists in France, under the lead of Jaurès